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THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

Pygmy Nuthatch.

Trends Revealed in Christmas Bird Count Numbers

The annual Christmas Bird Counts are great fun and an opportunity to meet other birders, see a variety of birds, and get a good understanding of what birds are available in an area. They also have a more serious side. The National Audubon Society makes the results of all counts available to everyone at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html. This citizen science data is used by environmentalists and ornithologists to understand population changes and to consider actions that might help to minimize the loss of endangered species.

Shortly before the 2012 Christmas Bird Count, I took a look at data from the Oakland CBC to see what it might say. For a variety of reasons, it was easy for me to analyze the data from 1974 to 2011, a 38-year period. I divided it in half and compared the years 1974–1992 to 1993–2011. From 1975 to 2012, the population of Alameda County increased more than 40 percent. Another development that potentially affected bird populations was the Oakland hills fire in 1991, just before the beginning of the second period. I averaged the count data over each period and applied some statistical tests to the results. On page 10, you'll see a chart for the top 20 increases and decreases in the population of particular species.

Expressing statistical figures as percentages can be misleading. The Red-should-

TRENDS continued on page 4

Why I Support GGAS

And why you should, too. Golden Gate Audubon covers a relatively small geographic area and has a correspondingly modest but very active membership and very few staff (and many years ago had almost none). And yet, over the last four decades, it has done more to influence the health of the bay and bring awareness of the importance of preserving the bay's birds and other wildlife and their habitats than have many larger, more well-known environmental organizations.

Long before the creation of the Bay Trail became a regional initiative, it was Golden Gate Audubon that led the successful effort to preserve shoreline access on Bayview Farm in Alameda in the face of developers seeking to create private housing right up to the bay edge.

When the Navy announced it was closing the Alameda Naval Air Station, it was Golden Gate Audubon that convened a scientific symposium that convinced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to request that more than 500 acres of the air station become a national wildlife refuge to support the endangered California Least Tern. That issue is still not fully resolved, but it is only because of GGAS's continued advocacy that the Least Tern colony survives to this day.

When the Port of Oakland began to fill wetlands adjacent to the Oakland International Airport, it was GGAS that led the successful court battles that preserved and restored

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$35 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

The Gull is published four times per year. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward The Gull.

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For Nature Store hours, please call or check the website.

Change and Continuity at GGAS

I was pleased to read Arthur Feinstein's historical summary on the cover of this issue of the *Gull*. His long view of Golden Gate Audubon's role in Bay Area conservation shows how we have been a small but powerful force for generations. Since GGAS's founding in 1917 and continuing to the present, its power has come from an army of active volunteers. Beginning in the mid-1990s, staff supported these volunteers and took on bigger campaigns, but ours is still largely a volunteer-run organization.

The most important characteristic of a mature nonprofit is the willingness to adapt to the times. So now GGAS is changing to meet a challenging economy, a move that will enable us to sustain and grow our core conservation and education programs into the future.

I have been honored to serve you all as GGAS's third executive director for nearly four years. Now, we are blessed to have Mike Lynes stepping in as the fourth executive director at this important time. Please give him and the board and staff your full support in the coming months.

Golden Gate Audubon is also blessed to have you, the most loyal members anywhere, as our rock and the foundation of our future strength. I plan to continue side by side with you and offer as much financial and volunteer support as I possibly can well into the future, and I ask that you do the same.

Look for me out in the field—I'll be the one with binoculars in hand gazing skyward.

—Mark Welther

I am honored to be stepping into the role of Golden Gate Audubon's executive director. As former directors Arthur Feinstein and Mark Welther point out in this issue, Golden Gate Audubon has a 100-year history of advocacy for birds and environmental education. Our role as staff is to help our members continue this legacy of bird conservation.

Like many nonprofit organizations in the early 2000s, Golden Gate Audubon enjoyed an expansion in grant income that allowed it to add staff and take on new projects. However, also like many nonprofits, GGAS experienced shrinking grant revenues after the 2007 financial crisis. As Mark indicates above, GGAS is adjusting to these economic realities to make sure that it can continue to serve our members and our mission in a sustainable way.

Going forward, we will focus on our core strengths: grassroots conservation advocacy on the issues most important to local bird populations; education for adults and children, including bird walks, classes, and our Eco-Education program; and fostering community and stewardship through our robust volunteer program. Our economic model will be one based on support from our membership, with supplemental grants for specific projects such as the Eco-Education program.

To be successful, we will need your support. Our members have always been generous with their time and money, and we are once again asking you to do what you can. We need new members to join our Conservation Committees, table at events, lead bird walks, help out in the office, or assist in our education programs. We also need your donations to support our projects.

Please join me in this transition with an investment in Golden Gate Audubon. With your help, we can ensure another 100 years of conservation leadership by Golden Gate Audubon.

—Mike Lynes, Executive Director

A Big Thank-You

We are grateful to the talented photographers who generously allowed us to use their photographs in the 2012 issues of the *Gull*: David Assmann, Patricia Bacchetti, Charles Denson, Bob Gunderson, Allen Hirsch, Lee Karney, Bob Lewis, Calvin Lou, Richard Pavak, Glen Tepke, Jerry Ting, and Steve Tracy.

Thanks for making us look good!



CONSERVATION CORNER

EAST BAY DOCENTS IN THE FIELD

Check the Golden Gate Audubon website to see when our docents will be at various East Bay sites.

As of mid-December, three Burrowing Owls have returned to spend the winter at Cesar Chavez Park in Berkeley. GGAS docents at the park can help you find and view the owls.

In Richmond, volunteers with our Birding the Bay Trail program are stationed along the trail at various locations to show you the many shorebird and waterfowl species.

Oakland's Lake Merritt, with its active egret rookery and Double-crested Cormorants nesting in the trees, is always exciting during breeding season. Starting in March, look for GGAS docents when you visit the lake. The docents show the birds to anyone who is interested and share information about the lake and its birdlife. If you'd like to be a docent, we provide all the training you need. For more information, please contact volunteer@goldengateaudubon.org.

OPPORTUNITIES TO RESTORE HABITAT

Kick off the new year by helping us to restore wildlife habitat at local sites. For site details and directions, please go to www.goldengateaudubon.org/volunteer.

El Estero de San Pablo Saturdays
January 5, February 2, and March 2
9 a.m.-noon

Alameda Woodlands Sundays
January 13, February 10, and March 10
9 a.m.-noon

Cedar Lake Slough Mondays
January 14, February 11, and March 11
10 a.m.-noon

Golden Gate Park (Tilden Park) Saturdays, January 19, February 16, and March 16, 9 a.m.-noon (with SF Recreation and Parks).

Alameda Flood Control District Saturdays, January 19, February 16, and March 16, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (MLK Jr. Day) 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

El Estero de San Pablo Saturdays, January 26, February 23, and March 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. with Tilden Park Environmental Center.

Alameda Woodlands Saturdays, January 26, February 23, and March 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. with the Park Conservancy.

AUDUBON CANYON RANCH SEEKS HOSTS

From mid-March to mid-July, thousands of visitors come to Audubon Canyon Ranch, Martin Griffin Preserve in Western Marin County to see one of the most significant sites on the West Coast for Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. GGAS volunteers help to serve as hosts when the preserve is open to the public, weekends from March 17 through July 14, and on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. If you'd like to volunteer or have questions about hosting, contact Anna Marie Bratton annamariobb@earthlink.net. Go to www.egret.org for more information on the ACR.

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the lands that became part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, which is now home to endangered California Clapper Rails and a thriving open space for birds and visitors.

This decade-long struggle increased the Port of Oakland's environmental awareness. When the port needed to deepen shipping channels, it approached GGAS for support in proposing an innovative habitat restoration using the dredge spoils. That collaboration resulted in the creation of Oakland's Middle Harbor Shoreline Park. Today, the park is a wonderful home to shorebirds and Least Terns.

It was GGAS that helped convince the SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission to work with the Port of San Francisco in restoring wetlands at Pier 98 and creating what is today Heron's Head Park. And it was GGAS that later worked with the Port of San Francisco to restore

wetlands and create habitat for an endangered plant, California sea-blite, at Pier 94.

And it was GGAS that played a leading role in saving two square miles of wonderful East Bay habitat in Orinda, successfully working with the developer of Gateway Valley (now called Wilder) to reduce the project's impacts.

All this is just a small part of the many successful efforts that this small but dedicated organization has achieved over the last 40 years.

I was fortunate to play a role in many of these efforts, as conservation chair, president of the board, executive director, and conservation director. It was a mostly joyful time working with GGAS volunteers who are among the most caring and dedicated people I've ever met. There was a time when personality conflicts forced me to leave the organization, but years have passed, and once again I am glad to see GGAS playing its crucial role in preserving wildlife habi-

tat in San Francisco Bay. While I now work for another environmental organization, I depend upon a healthy and active GGAS to provide either the support or the leadership on the many issues facing us, such as sea level rise, climate change, and continuing habitat loss.

Sadly, there are too few organizations dedicated solely to the preservation and enjoyment of wildlife and wildlife habitats. Golden Gate Audubon is one of the best. We need a strong and healthy Golden Gate Audubon. I urge you to join me in supporting this wonderful and effective organization.

—Arthur Feinstein

Arthur Feinstein was executive director of Golden Gate Audubon from 1990 to 2003. He is chair of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, a board member of the Clean Water Network, and chair of the Legislative Committee of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

dered Hawk increase of almost 1,000 percent reflects that the average number went from almost 3 during the first period to 29 during the second period. This is still a significant increase for hawks, which require a lot of territory. The Northern Pintail reduction of 90 percent indicates that the average number went from 1,599 to 153. Going from 10 to 20 birds is a 100 percent increase, while going from 20 to 10 is a 50 percent reduction.

Each entry in the table provokes a question: why the change? Common Ravens and American Crows, two of the species with the greatest increase, are attracted to human refuse, as scavengers. Perhaps our increasing population is part of the cause. Pygmy Nuthatches were uncommon in most of the Oakland count circle until after the 1991 fire, when roasted pinecones provided a food source. They came and stayed. Nuttall's, Acorn, and Hairy Woodpeckers have all increased. Buffleheads are now one of the most common winter ducks on San Francisco Bay, but Surf Scoters, which didn't quite make the table, have declined

52 percent and scaup species by 38 percent. The sharpest declines for these species have happened late in the second period.

California Quail and Wrentits have declined markedly, as has acreage of chaparral, their preferred habitat. The decline in Northern Pintail mirrors the nationwide drop in this species, perhaps due to loss of breeding habitat.

One Christmas Bird Count data set does not provide enough data for many conclusions, but coupled with data from many counts, stories of success and worry begin to emerge. The data is available because volunteers are in the field every year. So when you sign up to participate in a Christmas Bird Count—or a similar citizen science project—you are making a meaningful contribution to our knowledge.

—Bob Lewis

Bob Lewis, with co-compiler Dave Quady, organizes the annual Oakland CBC. He is a long-time Golden Gate Audubon field trip leader and instructor, and is also known for his superb photographs of birds such as those that illustrate this article. His photographs of



Northern Pintail.

Bob Lewis/www.wingbeats.org

birds and other wildlife can be seen at www.flickr.com/photos/boblewis/collections.

Bob's analysis of past Oakland CBC data was also a post on the GGAS blog. You can sign up at www.goldengateaudubon.org/blog to receive future posts, which are sent twice per week.

Birds with increasing populations			Birds with decreasing populations		
Species	% increase	Average number of birds, 1993–2011	Species	% decrease	Average number of birds, 1974–1992
Common Raven	1,258	146	White-winged Scoter	95	199
Red-shouldered Hawk	978	29	Bonaparte's Gull	94	164
Pygmy Nuthatch	362	95	Northern Pintail	90	1,599
American Crow	302	386	Red Knot	88	117
Common Merganser	276	87	Horned Lark	87	45
Hairy Woodpecker	222	23	Pine Siskin	84	891
Black Phoebe	177	186	Ruddy Turnstone	77	22
Townsend's Warbler	171	125	California Quail	77	432
Greater Yellowlegs	158	60	Glaucous-winged Gull	76	1,386
Black-necked Stilt	121	162	Loggerhead Shrike	75	26
Wood Duck	116	17	Brandt's Cormorant	74	107
Cinnamon Teal	110	40	Red-throated Loon	72	44
Marsh Wren	99	10	American Pipit	68	196
Acorn Woodpecker	97	39	Canvasback	65	1,356
Nuttall's Woodpecker	85	88	European Starling	64	6,154
Rock Pigeon	78	2,124	Wilson's Snipe	63	33
Gadwall	76	152	Wrentit	60	445
Bufflehead	65	2,093	Brewer's Blackbird	60	1,805
Brown Creeper	55	74	Burrowing Owl	58	10
Turkey Vulture	37	183	Red-breasted Merganser	57	90



SPEAKER SERIES



Alvaro Jaramillo

Magellanic Woodpecker.

Southern Cone of South America

Alvaro Jaramillo

Berkeley: Thursday, January 17 — 7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Southernmost South America evokes images of incredible mountain scenery, Cape Horn, and expansive Patagonia. It also has some of the oldest forests on Earth, the Pampas grasslands made famous in stories of the gauchos, and the little-known Chaco dry forest. The Humboldt Current is perhaps the richest part of the oceans on the planet. This southernmost triangle of the continent, the Southern Cone, is made up of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, southern Brazil, and Paraguay. It's an area with amazing birds and other wildlife, such as seedsnipes, rheas, yellow-finches, sierra-finches, shrike-tyrants, penguins, and diving-petrels. Come see the landscapes, birds, and other creatures of the far south of the Americas.

Alvaro Jaramillo was born in Chile and now lives in Half Moon Bay, where he runs Alvaro's Adventures, a birding and nature tour company. He has traveled extensively in the southern cone and is author of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Chile*. He is working on a book on the birds and other wildlife of Patagonia.

Eye on the Wild

Suzi Eszterhas

San Francisco: Thursday, February 21 — 7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Award-winning wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas, one of the few women in her field, specializes in traveling around the world to photograph species including penguins, lions, gorillas, grizzlies, and sea otters. Hear Eszterhas share memorable anecdotes and technical expertise from her time in the field—how she journeyed to Antarctica to capture six different species of penguin, how she composes photos while on the back of an elephant in India, how she stays safe when working on foot with grizzly bears, and how photographers—professional and amateur alike—can help to raise awareness of the problems facing wildlife today.

Suzi Eszterhas is a fellow of the prestigious International League of Conservation Photographers. Her work has been featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, in *Smithsonian*, and on ABC.com and Today.com. She is the author of the *Eye on the Wild* series for children. Eszterhas also leads photography tours around the world (www.suzieszterhas.com).



Copyright Suzi Eszterhas

Adelie Penguin.

The Wonder and Risk of Transpacific Migration

Peter Pyle

Berkeley: Thursday, March 21 — 7 p.m. refreshments, 7:30 program

Discover the amazing movement patterns of albatrosses, sharks, and other open-ocean creatures as wildlife biologist Peter Pyle presents his research on transpacific migration. Find out how Pacific Ocean migrants overcome the hardships of long-distance travel over the inhospitable and food-deprived central Pacific. The flights of Black-footed Albatrosses, which come 4,000 miles to California to get food for their chicks, will be a primary focus. His talk will also include Great White Sharks and other marine animals, and the over-water journeys of various shorebirds, land birds, insects, and bats.

For 24 years, Peter Pyle was a Farallon Island biologist, studying bird, bat, and butterfly migration as well as the habits of the Great White Shark. He currently works for the Institute for Bird Populations, where he researches changes in the abundance, distribution, and ecology of North and Latin American bird populations. In 2011 he had the fortune of describing a new bird species, Bryan's Shearwater, and naming it after his grandfather.



Peter Pyle

Black-footed Albatross.

Berkeley Speaker Series: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.html.

San Francisco Speaker Series: First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary. Visit www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html, and use the Map It! link on the left for directions. Public transit, street parking, and parking in a lot for a fee are available.



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city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking the east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring the hilltop scrub and south cliff.

Pescadero State Beach and Marsh

January 19

Saturday, January 19, 9 a.m. – noon

Martha Wessitsh, 415.681.8059,

415.533.4470 (cell), martha@wessitsh.com

We will scope sea- and shorebirds from the beach and then proceed into the marsh, where we will see land birds as well as ducks on the ponds. Meet at the parking lot west of Pescadero Rd. (Note: Coming from the north, this is the second parking lot on the right past the marsh. It is precisely at the Pescadero Rd. intersection.) Weather may be cold and windy or warm and sunny, so dress accordingly. There will be about 1 mile of walking on generally flat ground. Bathrooms available. Heavy rain cancels.

Coyote Hills Regional Park

January 20, 9 a.m. – noon

Sunday, January 20, 9 a.m. – noon

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

We'll look for wintering shorebirds, waterfowl, rails, and raptors as well as resident songbirds. Trails are level. Water and restrooms available. Heavy rain cancels. Map and directions: www.ebparks.org/parks/coyote_hills. Parking fee is \$5.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

January 23, 9:30 a.m. – noon

Wednesdays, January 23, February 27,

9:30 a.m. – noon

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,

hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,

510.528.2093, ruthtobey@gmail.com

Meet at the large spherical cage near the Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. This is the high season at the lake—come see all our wintering friends! And in February, there's a chance that the first of the nesting cormorants (complete

with double crests) will be hatching at the real estate.

Take the I-5 to the Delta and Valley Refuges, then walk to the parking area at the end of the beach. We'll have a picnic and then go to the lake near the end of the beach. The lake is a good place to look for waterfowl. Bring water and snacks. Rain cancels.

San Pablo Reservoir and EBMUD Trails

Saturday, January 26, 8 a.m. – noon

Tim Howe, timgh88@yahoo.com

Join me in walking an EBMUD trail (Our san) down to the parking/fishing area at San Pablo Reservoir. We'll walk through pine and oak forests looking and listening for nuthatches, woodpeckers, and wrens. Out over the water, we might see Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, and Common Merganser. We'll then return via the same trail. Meet at the intersection of Bear Creek Rd. and Camino Pablo Rd. in Orinda. There's an off-pavement graveled area for parking. There are no bathrooms. Bring water and snacks. Rain cancels.

Sacramento Delta and Valley Refuges

Saturday – Sunday, January 26 – 27

Steve and Carol Lombardi, hotrock175@gmail.com, 925.785.0130; Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net, 510.666.9936

Winter is a time of abundance in the Sacramento Valley, with waterfowl spectacles never to be forgotten. We'll meet at 8 a.m. at the Flying J Travel Plaza, Thornton Rd. and Hwy. 12, less than a quarter mile east of I-5, for a restroom, coffee, and get-acquainted stop before we proceed to our first birding destination on nearby Staten Island Rd. Those wanting a trucker's breakfast can come early.

These will be two busy days. On Saturday we'll visit the delta's Sandhill Crane staging area, then head north to the lovely wetlands of the Cosumnes River Preserve and finally another 100 miles north to the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, where we'll witness the evening flight of Snow, Ross's, and White-fronted Geese, a flight that can number in the hundreds of thousands. We'll spend Saturday night in Willows. On Sunday we'll start out at the

Sacramento refuge, then go down I-5 to the Colusa NWR. Pending reports from local birders, our last stop might be north of Marysville, where hundreds of Tundra Swans have gathered in recent years.

The trip is limited to 30 participants. Please consider a possible contribution to the chapter if you are a confirmed participant. We reserve a lot of money in the chapter for their own reservation. The trip is a fund-raiser for Golden Gate Audubon. Chapter finances are currently very tight, due mainly to grants having dried up. We ask participants to donate \$25 per person to the chapter. Of course, a larger donation would be welcome.

Tilden Regional Park—Nature Area

Friday, February 1, 8:30 a.m.

Alan Kaplan, LNKPLN@earthlink.net, 510.526.7609 (questions or messages)

Meet at the parking lot for the Tilden Nature Area and Environmental Education Center. We'll continue our theme of birds in winter, plus some Groundhog Day preparation. The Nature Area and Jewel Lake trails are generally flat, with some uphill. Restrooms and water at start and middle of walk. Map and directions: www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden/tna

Bayfront Park and Pinole Wetland Field Station

Friday, February 8, 8:30 a.m.

Alan Kaplan, LNKPLN@earthlink.net, 510.526.7609 (questions or messages)

Meet at Bayfront Park in Pinole, at the foot of Tennent Ave. We'll look for both shorebirds and land birds. Restrooms and water at start.

Take I-80 to Pinole Valley Rd. and then to Tennent Ave. Follow Tennent, cross the railroad tracks and turn left into the small public parking lot near the water treatment plant.

Shadow Cliffs Beginners Bird Walk

Saturday, February 9, 9 a.m. – noon

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8

Steve and Carol Lombardi,
hotrock175@gmail.com, 925/785-0130

This walk is for children, beginners, and all others. Shadow Cliffs is a pretty park with varied habitat. We should see many land birds and waterbirds on an easy walk. Bring binocs if you have them. Trails are generally flat, but some can be muddy. Map and directions: www.ebparks.org/parks/shadow_cliffs. Restrooms available. Parking fee is \$6.

Berkeley Marina

Alameda County

Sunday, February 10, 9 a.m. – noon

Anne Hoff, anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Meet behind Seabreeze Market on the west side of the I-80/University Ave. interchange. We should see lots of waterfowl, many shorebirds, a few land birds, and some surprises. Heavy rain cancels.

Sacramento River Delta with Dolphin Charters

Saturday, February 16, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

GGAS leader to be announced

Space may still be available on board the comfortable Dolphin Charters boat to explore the delta's rich habitats and see thousands of Tundra Swan, Snow Geese, White-fronted Geese, and Canada Geese, plus myriad ducks and overwintering and resident raptors. The trip, which departs from the Antioch marina, is limited to 30 participants. Cost is \$85 for GGAS members, \$95 for nonmembers. To reserve your space and make payment, contact GGAS Office Manager John Trubina by Friday, January 18, by e-mail at ggas@goldengateaudubon.org or by phone at 510.843.2222. Confirmed participants will receive directions to the marina and other instructions.

Garretson Point, Arrowhead Marsh, and Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline

Oakland, Alameda County

Sunday, February 24, 9 a.m. – noon

Rusty Scalf, 510.666-9936,
rscalf@sonic.net

A high tide should give us good looks at rails and shorebirds. Park at the Garretson Point parking lot at the end of Edgewater Blvd. off Hegenberger Rd. We'll walk a mile on a flat, paved trail along the shore to Arrowhead Marsh and return the same way. Water and restrooms available. Map and directions: www.ebparks.org/parks/martinking.

Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges

Siskiyou County

Sunday, March 10, 8 a.m.

Donations

Many thanks to our generous donors! Donations from September 29, 2012, November 27, 2012.

GOLDEN EAGLE \$1,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous, Ms. Andrea Burhoe, Diane Ross Leech, Irmgard Schmid-Maybach, Juliet Lamont and Phil Price, Mary and John Price, Allen and Helen Ridley, Calvin O. Walters, III

PEREGRINE FALCON \$500-999

Karim Al-Khafaji, Ellen Barth, Patricia Greene, John Hunt Kenny, Regina Phelps (Emergency Management & Safety Solutions)

LEAST TERN \$100-499

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Eddie Bartley, eddie@naturetrip.com,
415.355.0450; Noreen Weeden

In mid-March, Lower Klamath is one of the premier staging grounds for waterfowl preparing for a last leap north to their spring and summer breeding grounds. Expect to see ducks and geese in the tens of thousands, as well as swans, cranes, and raptors, especially Bald Eagle and perhaps Golden Eagle and Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks. Great Horned Owls are expected, Barn and Short-eared Owls are fairly common. Meet at the refuge visitor center. We'll bird most of the day with a break for lunch. You can join us for part or all of the trip.

From I-5 at Weed, follow Hwy. 97 northeast for 45 miles toward the Oregon border. Take Stateline Rd. (Hwy. 161) east to Tulelake. Turn south on Hill Rd. and go 4 miles. Drive from San Francisco is about 7 hours. Suggest overnighing Saturday and Sunday. Wicked weather cancels.

Honey Lake and Greater Sage Grouse

Saturday – Sunday, March 16 – 17

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,
davequady@att.net

Lassen County in mid-March offers the chance to enjoy Greater Sage Grouse displaying on a lek, many wintering raptors and waterfowl, a few spring migrants, and a spectacular setting for seeking northeast California's resident birds. This trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader, *reservations open up at noon on January 22*. Detailed directions will be provided to those confirmed on the trip. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is in the Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Plan to bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. Carpooling encouraged.

Travel with GGAS

Spaces are still available on the following trips. For information, contact Pat Kirkpatrick at patkirkpatrick14@gmail.com, or her assistant Alexis Hummel, at avarga542@aol.com.

South Texas Specialties—February 26 to March 6, led by Naturalist Journeys.

Winter Birds in Puget Sound—March 6–10, led by Harry Fuller

Spring Migration in Wisconsin—Two tours, May 5–11 and May 12–18, led by Rich Cimino of Yellowbilled Tours

Nome, Alaska—Five four-day trips, starting May 28, June 1, June 5, June 9, and June 13, led by Rich Cimino.

Summer in the Oregon Mountains—June 21–24, led by Harry Fuller.

Calvin W. Hom, Marian E. Hopping, Jan Horton, Timothy G. Howe, Henry S. Howong, George Humphreys, Barbara Hurtig-Willis, Alan Hutchison, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Galante, Stan Ginn, Carol Lee Ginsburg, Dr. William Gottfried, Page Bynum Griffin, Jeanne Griffiths, Rasa Gustaitis, Virginia Hammel, Marguerite Harrell, Christine J. Hayamizu, Jan Hitchcock, Susan Hirsch, Leonard Horwitz, Katherine Howard, Virginia Irving, Paula P. Itaya, Cindy Johnson, Cathy Jones, Carolyn Jones-Weinberger, Ann F. Kadyk, Max C. Kirkeberg, Annerose Kmoch, Elizabeth Ingalls, Jean E. Jackson, Jerry Jedlicka, Margaret Jesseph, William P. Jones, Anita Joplin, Meredith McGovney Kaplan, Elizabeth Kean, Eileen M. Kelleher, Nancy B. Kenyon, David Kessler, Homer Kessler, Dr. James, Marilyn R. Kinch, Nancy Knight, Jaime C. Kooser, Anna Korn, Adeline Bridget Kroll, Hicomi Kubin, Carol Ann Kuelper, Jennie Kwok, Jeanne M. Laberge, Llyanna Landes, Corinne Lambden, Johan Langewis, Peter J. Langley, David J. Larson, Ingrid Larson, Richard Horowitz Lavinghouse, Sandra Lawrie, Sharon Leaf, Edgar and Joyce Lehmann, Elizabeth Ann Leite, Ed Leong, Fletcher Lesley, Susan Lessin, Jean Bruins Levin, Sally Levinson, Rick Lewis, William F. Link, Doris Lopez, Rosemary B. Loughman, Mr. and Mrs. James J. Ludwig, Frawley J. Lynch, Karen Madigan, Steven G. Margolin, Mylon Douglas Macmillan, Aaron Maizlish, Marlene Clandenen Martin, Janine G.S. Martin, Claudine Marquet, Dr. Rani Marx, Ms. Mary Ann Mason, John H. Maurer, Donald McCarthy, Maggie McElroy, Milton R. McKenzie, Diana McKennett, Miles R. McKey, Teloca McLinn, Marie McNulty, Valerie C. Meehan, Stephen Mendel, Barbara J. Messmore, Toni Mester, Amy Meyer, Rose Mikovsky, Katherine S. Miles, Karin Moore, Sharon Moore, Leslie S. Morelli, Martha F. Morrow, Elizabeth Moseley, Barbara Mow, David B. Moyer, John Muenchow, Robert D. Mullaney, Frank Mulligan III, Mark A. Mushkat, Christine S. Nakashima, S. Napoli, Verne Nelson, Glenn P. Nevill, Charles Newbery, Melissa Newman, Scott Newton, Sachiko Y. Nicholson, Carol Northrup, Maureen Noon, Leah Norwood, Terri O'Connor, Jane Dalton O'Donnell, Jo Ann Ogden, Roberta S. O'Grady, Lavinia Oppenheim, Eugene O'Rourke, Amy Ossenbruggen, Sheryl Ottaway, Lisa Owens Viani, Morton D. Paley, Susan E. Palo, Nancy L. Parker, Dr. Benjamin D. Parmeter, Michael Perlmutter, Robert R. Piper, Cora Pitcock, Virginia Polak, Tamara Poole, Suzanne Forrest Pope, Elizabeth Powell, Joan Primeau, Judith Pritchard, Myron Pstrak, Thomas Pye, Kelly Purcell, Dorothy M. Quate, Dan Rademacher, John T. Rees, Patricia L. Reese, William B. Remick, Cathy Rice, David C. Rice, Iris A. Richards, Sandra Ried, Suzanne Riess, Stephanie Rieger, William C. Robbins, III, David Robinson, Rebecca E. Robinson, William Rogers, Stephen H. Roper, James W. Ross, Elizabeth Rottger, Steve Runyon, James V. Russell, Patrick J. Russell, Guy Saperstein, Mary Sapirc, Shirley Schell, Verena Scheilling, Ken Schneider, Steven F. Scholl, Lionel Schour, Sondra B. Schwartz, John Scott and Sarah Louise Harrison, Victoria Seher, Hildegard F. Serbin, Joseph C. Shami, Linda F. Sharp, Debra Love Shearwater, Joanne Sherrard, Lucy L. Sidener, Joanne Sidwell, Marjorie Siegel, Robert Siegel, Judi Sierra, Ellen R. Sirbu, Rita Sklar, Alice

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William Schultz, in honor of Hugo Enriquez and Irene Rodriguez

William Schultz, in honor of Hugo Enriquez and Irene Rodriguez

William Schultz, in honor of Hugo Enriquez and Irene Rodriguez

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Mr. and Mrs. John Kadyk, in memory of Mildred Bennet

Natasha Kurzhanskaya, in memory of Mildred Bennet

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Farallon Islands Foundation
National Neighbor Woods
The Watershed Project



An emerging theme from this year's fall migration was possible irruptions of northern and mountain species, particularly Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Reports of Red Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks were also noteworthy, and there was one intriguing report of a possible Bohemian Waxwing.

LOONS TO DUCKS

An Oct. 7 pelagic trip to Bodega Cyn. and Cordell Bank (SON/MRN) located 3 Flesh-footed and 2 Short-tailed Shearwaters (DSi, oob). A Manx Shearwater highlighted an Oct. 1 Farallon Island pelagic trip, SF (PP, DSh, AJ, oob). Perhaps the same bird was refound Oct. 26 off Bodega Head, SON (GHu, DSh). Coastal movements of Black-vented Shearwaters were impressive, with high count of 456 on Nov. 18 from Pigeon Pt., SM (RT).

The continuing Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) remained at SE Farallon Island, SF, through Oct. 8 (AJ, oob; mob). A Brown Booby lurked off the coast Oct. 12–Nov. 11, with sightings at PRNS Lighthouse, MRN (KH; TB; oob); SE Farallon Island (MB); and Pigeon Pt., SM (RT). The PRNS sighting is just the 2nd MRN record. A Least Bittern remained at Ellis Cr. in Petaluma, SON, through Oct. 8 (CR).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A trek up Mt. St. Helena on Oct. 29 was rewarded with a Northern Goshawk perched on the SON-L. county line (GHu). A soaring Harlan's Hawk was photographed over Battery Godfrey, SF, on Oct. 17 (HC). A Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) visited Oyster Bay RS, ALA, on Nov. 14 (NA). On Oct. 11, a Sabine's Gull winged past the USS Hornet in ALA (JL).

Until recently considered the northern race of Xantus's Murrelet, a Scripps's Murrelet was spotted off Pigeon Pt., SM, on the 23rd (RT). Ancient Murrelets were reported off the SM and SON coasts on 4 occasions, with 19 birds tallied from Bodega Head, SON, on Nov. 22 (SC).



Harris's Sparrow in Hayward.

DOVES TO THRASHERS

Owlers located roosting Long-eared Owls at 3 locales: Coyote Hills RP, ALA, on Oct. 18 (JB); Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, MRN, on Nov. 15 (LS); and Oyster Pt. in S. SF, SM, on the 22nd (RT; RC, CL). A Lesser Nighthawk watched the Giants lose to the Reds at AT&T Park, SF, on Oct. 6 (DH, fide JC). A dark swift over PRNS Fish Docks on Oct. 4 was ID'd as a Chimney Swift (RS; TE).

A Cordilleran Flycatcher joined a mixed flock feeding on California oak moths at Crown Beach in ALA on Oct. 10 (NA). An Eastern Phoebe returned for a 2nd winter to Stage Rd. in Pescadero, SM, beginning Nov. 18 (RT; AE, DP). A Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) turned up on Nov. 19 at the RCA Towers, PRNS, MRN (DSi; JMi).

A well-marked Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) joined a gleaner flock along Gazos

Cr., SM, on Oct. 7 (GHu). A Philadelphia Vireo drew birders to N. L., GGP, SF, Oct. 9–11 (DM; mob). A Gray Catbird lingered Oct. 1–5 at Bodega Bay (RR, DF; mob). A Sage Thrasher hugged the cliffs below Battery Mendell in the MRN Headlands on Oct. 16 (DSi). Another Sage Thrasher at Bodega Marine Lab on the 23rd qualified as the 3rd SON record (JS). Careful search of the outer PRNS pipit flocks revealed a Red-throated Pipit at PRNS Fish Docks on Oct. 4–5 (RS) and at Abbott's Lagoon Oct. 12–21 (JMi; EE).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler migration brought an invasion of 60+ Palm Warblers to the region, including 10–17 at Nunes (A) and Mendoza (B) Ranches at PRNS, Nov. 4–12 (JMo, DSi; mob). A Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthophila vermivorus*) graced a private garden in Pescadero Oct. 18–25, qualifying as just the 3rd SM county record (MK; mob). A Painted Redstart at Mendoza (B) Ranch made birding headlines Nov. 12–15 (DSi; mob).

A Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) eluded cats at Nunes (A) Ranch, constituting a 1st MRN record (KH; mob). A Black-throated Sparrow forsook the desert for Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, on Oct. 15 (LG, JF). Harris's Sparrows joined *Zonotrichia* flocks at Stevens Cr. Mitigation area, SCL, on Oct. 30–Nov. 2 (KB; mob) and at the Grant Ave. entrance to Hayward RS, Oct. 31–Nov. 26 (BD; mob). A female Dickcissel staked out the lawn at Fort Mason, SF, Sept. 30–Oct. 13 (DA; mob). A Baltimore Oriole lingered through Oct. 5 at Diekmann's Store in Bodega Bay (SC; mob).

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Observers: AE, Al Eisner; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; BD, Bob Dunn; CL, Calvin Lou; CR, Craig Ross; DA, David Assmann; DF, Dea Freid; DH, Dylan Hayes; DM, Dan Murphy; DP, Donna Pomeroy; DSh, Debi Shearwater; DSi, Dan Singer; EE, Erik Enbody; GHu, Garth Harwood; GHu, Gene Hunn; HC, Hugh Cotter; JB, John Blakelock; JC, Josiah Clark; JF, Jeff Fairclough; JL, John Luther; JMi, Jeff Miller; JMo, Joe Morlan; JS, Jackie Sones; KB, Katherine Bass; KH, Keith Hansen; LG, Laurie Graham; LS, Lang Stevenson; MB, Matt Brady; MK, Mark Kudrav; NA, Noah Arthur; PP, Peter Pyle; RC, Roy Carlson; RR, Ruth Rudesill; RS, Rich Stallcup; RT, Ron Thorn; SC, Scott Carey; TB, Tony Brake; TE, Todd Easterla

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve

Birds of the Bay Area

Wednesdays, January 9 – February 13, 7:15 – 8:45 p.m., plus five Saturday or Sunday field trips to be announced (January 12 – February 3 and February 16 – 17) and one weekend field trip, February 9–10

Spaces may still be available in this class held at the ideal time to view shorebirds, raptors, ducks, geese, and winter resident songbirds. The class meets at the Ed Roberts Campus at Ashby BART, 3075 Adeline Street, Berkeley, Lee. \$105 for GGAS members, \$125 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). To sign up, call the GGAS office at 510.842.2222.

Birding by Ear

Thursdays, January 17 – February 28, 7 – 8:30 p.m., plus six Saturday field trips, January 19 – March 2, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Spring is almost here, and with birds in full song, it's the perfect time to learn some of our local spring songsters. Participants will listen to birdsongs in class and then on field trips will visit various habitats to get a full range of the types of songs heard in the Bay Area. Visit Denise's website (www.blkittiwake.com) for field trip locations. The class, limited to 20, will be held in the East Bay at the Albany Adult School. Fee: \$100. To sign up, go to <http://adulted.ausdk12.org>.

California Raptors in Winter

Class presentation and bird walks: Sunday, January 20, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Sunday field trips, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.: January 27, Point Reyes; February 3, San Mateo coast; February 10, Sacramento Delta. Relatively mild temperatures and productive food sources make California an ideal destination for raptors in winter. This popular class will focus on the amazing evolutionary adaptations and life histories of California's hawks, eagles, harriers, kites, and falcons. Presentations include information specific to winter resident, migrant, and seldom-seen vagrant raptors. On three full-day field trips, we'll focus on this order but won't ignore the myriad other birds that call California home during winter.

Field trip meeting points will be announced in class, where carpooling can be coordinated. Inclement weather postpones field trips to a rain date of February 24 and/or March 3. Participants in both classes are encouraged to join the March 10 field trip to the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges (see page 8).

The class meets at the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory office, Building 1064, Ft. Cronkite in the Marin Headlands. Class size is limited to 20. Fee: \$80 for GGAS members, \$100 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). To sign up, call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222.

North American Owls

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, February 5 and 6, 12 and 13, 7 – 9 p.m., plus three weekend afternoon and/or evening field trips in February and March (dates and times to be determined).

Owls fascinate most of us. Learn what makes them different from other birds and how to identify them by sight and sound, and gain an understanding of their habits and habitats. Classes held at the GGAS office will be illustrated with slides and with sounds of the birds of the night. Field trips will visit local owl habitats, where we'll hope to hear and see owls. Dave Quady, a frequent GGAS field trip leader, is author of the owls section of *National Geographic's Complete Birds of North America*. Class size is limited to 20. Fee: \$80 for GGAS members, \$100 for nonmembers (includes 6-month introductory GGAS membership). Sign up beginning at noon on Monday, January 7, by calling the GGAS office at 510.843.2222.

Birding with Joe Morlan

The next session of classes on North American birds taught by Joe Morlan, and endorsed by Golden Gate Audubon, begin the first week in February. The two consecutive parts of Field Ornithology II, covering land birds, meet on Wednesdays, February 6 to March 20 and April 3 to May 15. Field Ornithology III, focusing on waterbirds, meets on Tuesdays, February 5 to March 19 and April 2 to May 14. Optional field trips may be arranged for weekends. All classes are held at the John Adams Campus of City College of San Francisco, 1860 Hayes Street; free parking is available adjacent to the building. The fee for each class is \$145; there is a \$15 discount for registering a week early. For more details and registration information, go to log.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/spring13.htm.

Become a Master Birder!

Golden Gate Audubon and the California Academy of Sciences are excited to introduce a Master Birding Program. The objective is to help 20 ambitious students enhance their birding and conservation skills and to develop 20 new active volunteers for GGAS, the academy, and other Bay Area institutions.

The program is an advanced curriculum with 10 monthly Wednesday evening classes (starting February 6 and held mostly at the academy) and 10 field trips (on the following Sundays). To complete the program, students must participate in at least 70 percent of the classes and trips, volunteer at least 100 hours at any participating organization over two years, and develop a field notebook, among other activities.

Instructors are Jack Dumbacher, Eddie Bartley, and Bob Lewis. The fee is \$500. For information on the prerequisites and other details, go to www.goldengateaudubon.org.

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NEW YEAR BRINGS CHANGES TO THE GULL

Beginning in April, the *Gull* will shift to a quarterly, eight-page, full-color format. This change will save printing and mailing costs while providing a more lively and colorful publication. The new quarterly will include more birding-focused features, such as a Backyard Birding column and regular articles about local birding hotspots.

Starting in February, we will send a monthly calendar of upcoming field trips by e-mail. Field trips will continue to be listed on our website. But because we have so many trips and limited print space, they will not appear in the new quarterly *Gull*.

If you're not currently on our e-mail list, let us know, and we will add you so that you don't miss any field trip announcements. Send your e-mail address to ggas@goldengateaudubon.org. (If you have been receiving our This Month at Golden Gate Audubon e-newsletter, you are already on the list and will receive the field trip calendar automatically. You do not need to contact us.)

We understand that some of you do not use a computer or e-mail. If that's the case, please call our office at 510.843.2222, and we will mail you a printed copy of the field trip listing each month.

These changes are in response to several factors: feedback from the communications survey we did last summer, budget pres-

ures, and society's continuing shift toward online communications. Now you will be able to hear from us in more ways than ever, and we hope that you'll find the media that work best for you.

- Quarterly print edition of the *Gull*.
- Online PDF version of the *Gull*.
- Monthly field trip calendar by e-mail.
- Monthly e-newsletter, which will be renamed the e-Gull. (It's less of a mouthful than This Month at Golden Gate Audubon!)
- Golden Gate Birder, the GGAS blog. You can subscribe at www.goldengateaudubon.org/blog and automatically receive new posts by e-mail.
- GGAS website.
- Facebook and Twitter.

Questions or comments? Contact Communications Director Ilana DeBare at idebare@goldengateaudubon.org. We're excited about the new full-color *Gull* and monthly field trip e-mail and hope you will be too!

Same Building, New Office

If you are visiting the GGAS office or our Nature Store, note that as of January 1 we have moved—but only to the other end of the hallway in the same building. (We're still Suite G.) New store hours are Monday through Wednesday from 1 to 5 p.m., and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. We're closed on Friday.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON BOARD

The Golden Gate Audubon Society is now accepting petitions for the nomination of candidates to the board of directors, as specified in the GGAS bylaws, for a three-year term beginning on July 1, 2013.

Member petitions must be submitted to the GGAS office by February 25, 2013, for inclusion in the board election to be held beginning on April 1, 2013. Petitions must be signed by a minimum of 100 (maximum of 500) members in good standing and must include a written agreement by the nominated candidate to serve.

GGAS will then post the candidate ballot on April 1 on the GGAS website and in the April–June 2013 *Gull* newsletter. Election ballot forms may also be obtained at the GGAS office on April 1 and at the GGAS annual meeting (date in June to be set). Completed ballots must be received at the GGAS office by Friday, June 21, 2013.

If you wish to submit a nominating petition, please call Executive Director Mike Lynes at 510.843.6551.